

Commissioning of peace officers by certain hospitals

HB 372 by B. Hunter (Carriker)

- DIGEST:** HB 372 would have allowed hospitals in cities of 50,000 or more residents to commission and employ peace officers for hospital security.
- GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:** "This bill would allow hospitals in cities over 50,000 population to commission peace officers for the protection of the hospital. The bill would allow both public and private hospitals of any size to commission peace officers, and does not specify whether the governing board, management, or what entity would be responsible for commissioning the officers. In addition, the public safety would be better served if these hospitals would coordinate their efforts with local law enforcement agencies rather than commissioning peace officers themselves."
- RESPONSE:** Rep. Bob Hunter, the author of HB 372, said: "It is unfortunate that our hospitals in towns with populations of 50,000 or more will be denied the peace officer protection that our hospitals in Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio now have.
- "At their own expense, in accordance with HB 372, our hospitals would have been able to commission licensed peace officers to protect the patients and visitors, particularly at our trauma centers and emergency rooms, from gang violence and others who commit crimes within our hospitals.
- "Even though the bill passed without objection in both the House and the Senate, we will have to try again in the next session to adopt and get signed into law this vitally needed law enforcement protection."
- NOTES:** HB 372 was analyzed in the April 5 *Daily Floor Report*.